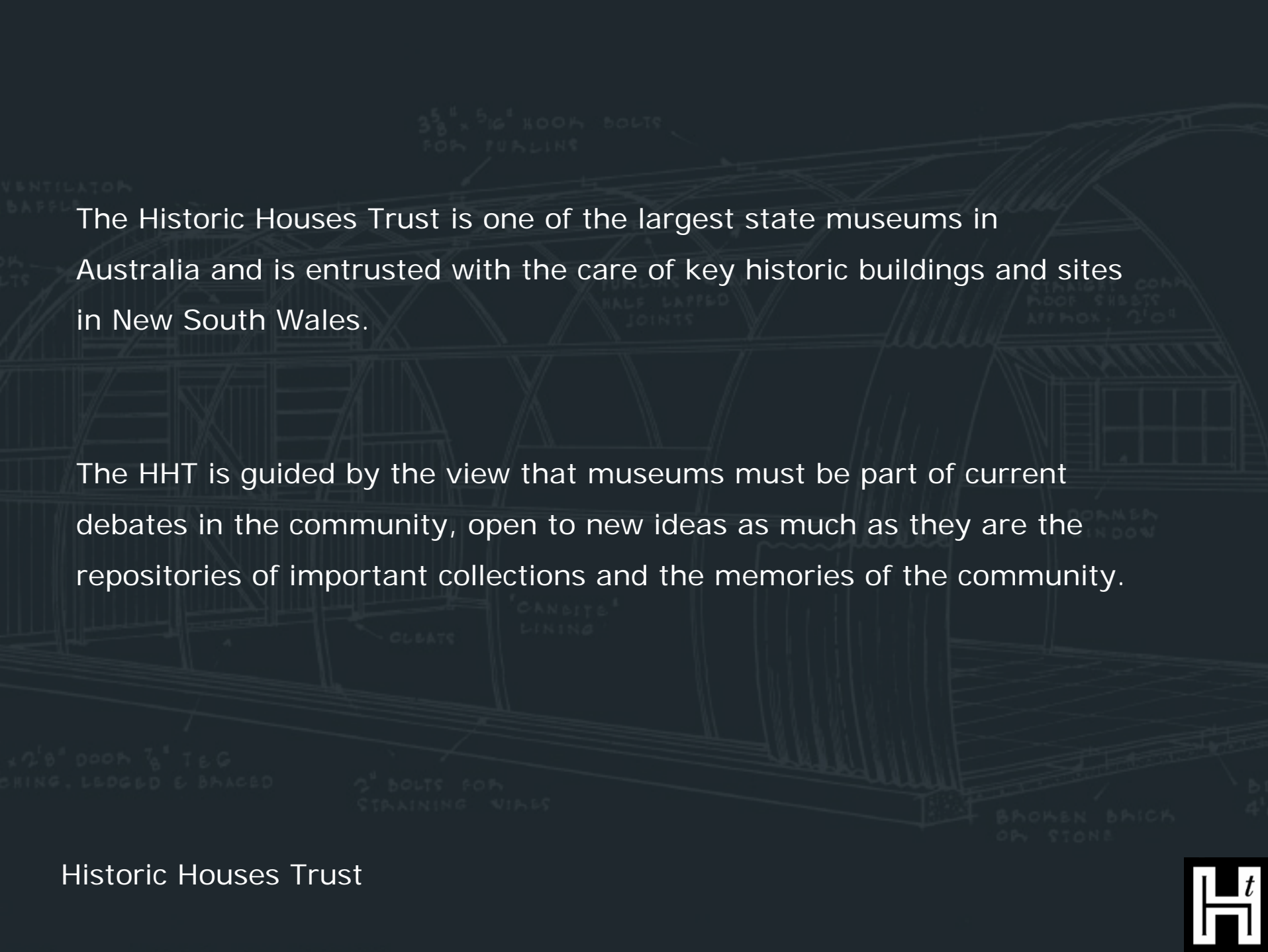


HISTORY GOES FULL SEMI-CIRCLE TO SAVE POMMYTOWN

The conservation of a Nissen hut by the Historic Houses Trust



Richard Silink July 2009

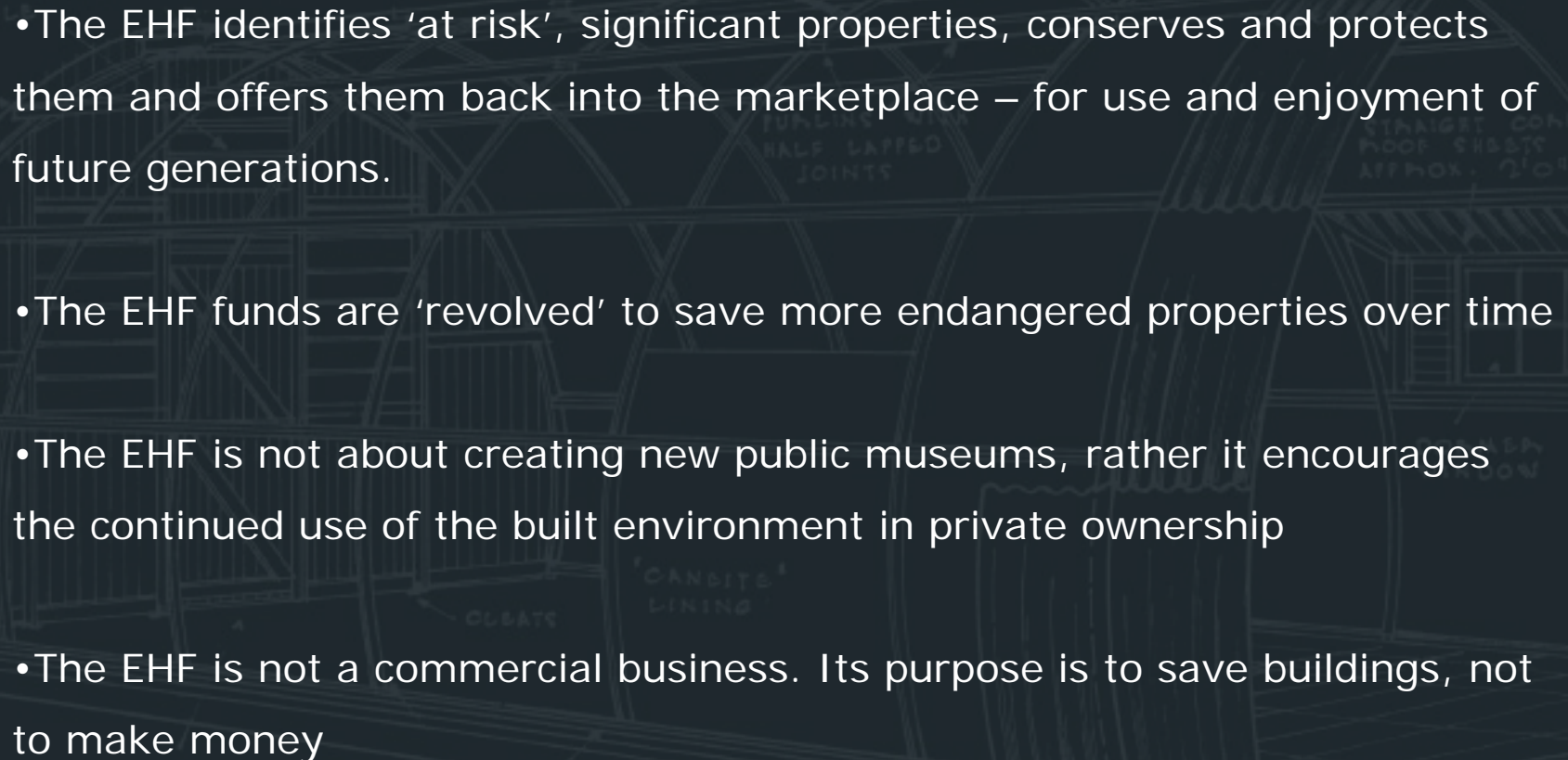
A technical architectural drawing of a building's interior, likely a historic structure. The drawing shows a series of arched roof sections supported by a wooden frame. Various parts are labeled with handwritten-style text: '3 5/8" x 5/16" HOOK BOLTS FOR FURLING' at the top; 'VENTILATION CAPS' on the left; 'HALF LAPPED JOINTS' in the center; 'STRAIGHT CORNICE ROOF SHEETS APPROX. 2'0"' on the right; 'CORNER WINDOW' below the roof sheets; 'CANDITE LINING' on a vertical support; 'CLEATS' on the floor joists; '2 1/8" DOOR 3/8" T&G SIKING, LEDGED & BRACED' on the left side of the floor; '3" BOLTS FOR STRAINING VIBES' at the bottom center; and 'BROKEN BRICK OR STONE' at the bottom right. The drawing is a perspective view, showing the depth of the structure.

The Historic Houses Trust is one of the largest state museums in Australia and is entrusted with the care of key historic buildings and sites in New South Wales.

The HHT is guided by the view that museums must be part of current debates in the community, open to new ideas as much as they are the repositories of important collections and the memories of the community.



Rose Seidler House

- 
- The background is a dark, semi-transparent architectural drawing of a building's structural frame. It shows a series of arches and beams. Annotations in a light, handwritten-style font are scattered across the drawing, including: '3 5/8" x 5/8" ROOF BOLTS FOR FUNDING' at the top; 'VENTILATION CAP' on the left; 'HALF LAPPED JOINTS' in the center; 'STRAIGHT CORNER ROOF SHEETS APPROX. 2'0" on the right; 'CANDITE LINING' in the lower center; 'CLEARE' below it; '2" BOLTS FOR STRAINING VIALS' at the bottom left; and 'BROKEN BRICK OR STONE' at the bottom right.
- The EHF identifies 'at risk', significant properties, conserves and protects them and offers them back into the marketplace – for use and enjoyment of future generations.
 - The EHF funds are 'revolved' to save more endangered properties over time
 - The EHF is not about creating new public museums, rather it encourages the continued use of the built environment in private ownership
 - The EHF is not a commercial business. Its purpose is to save buildings, not to make money



Glenfield, Casula



Glenfield, Casula



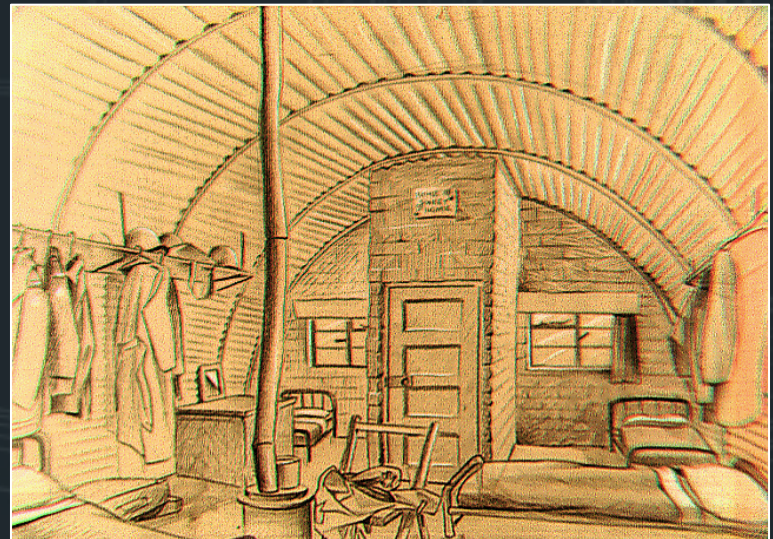
Exeter Farm, Glenwood



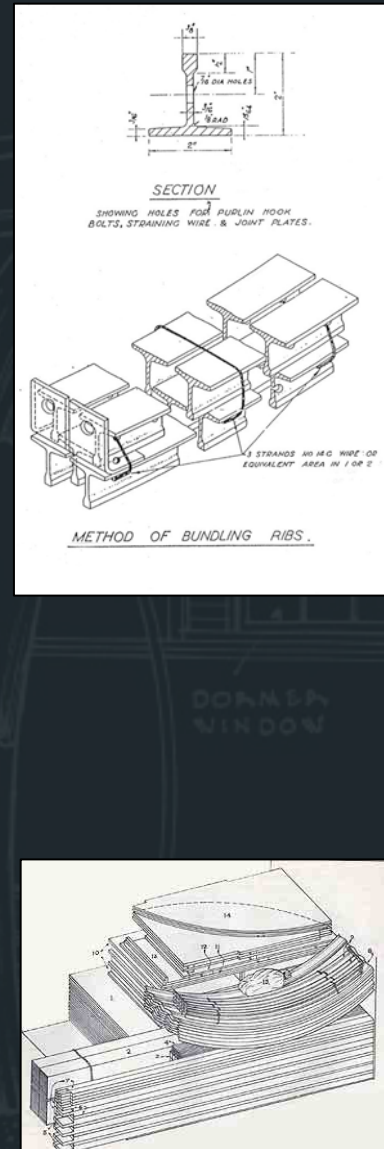
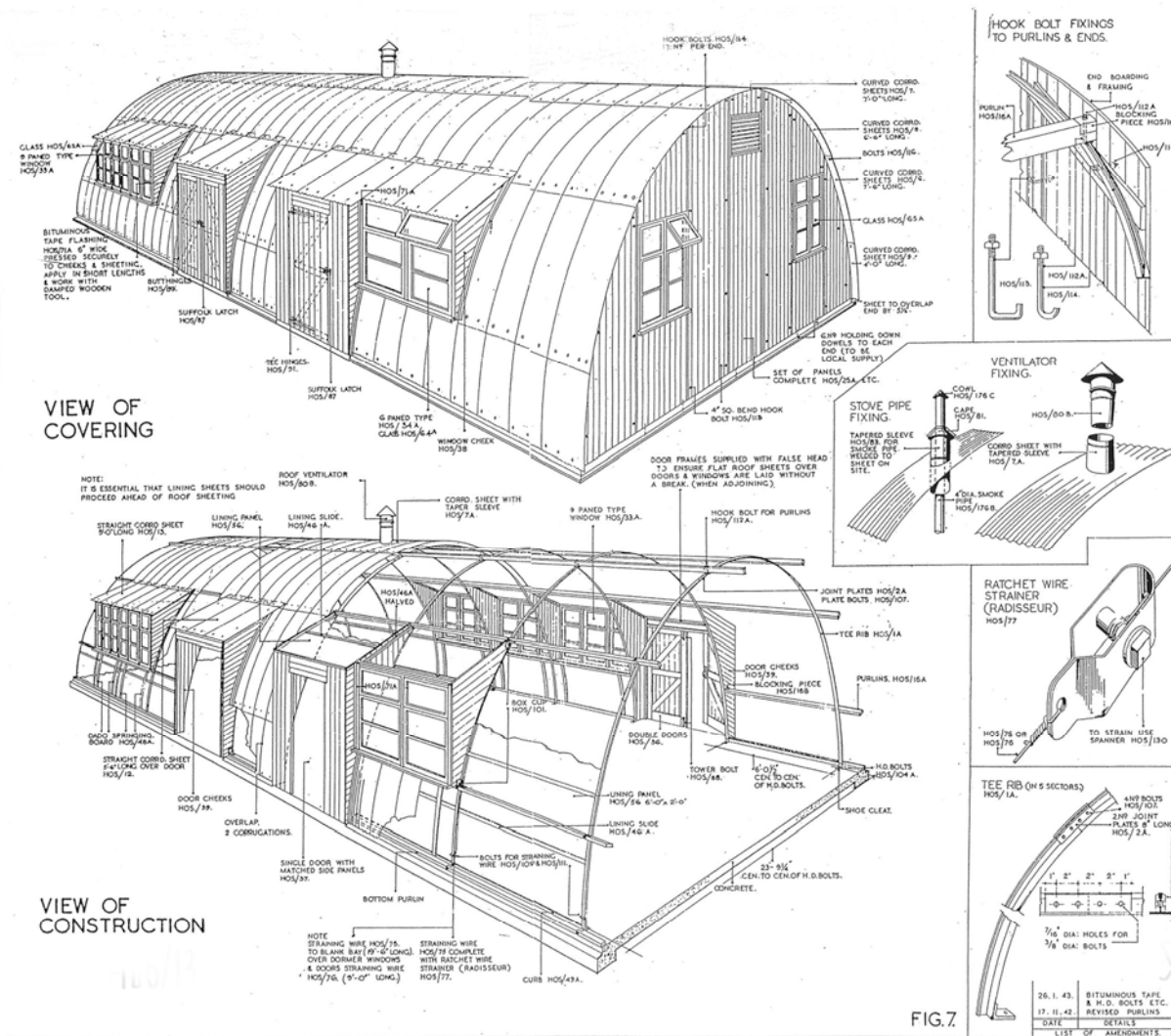
Exeter Farm, Glenwood



Nissen Hut 4 Somerset St - Belmont North



Wartime uses of Nissen huts





Jerilderie, NSW



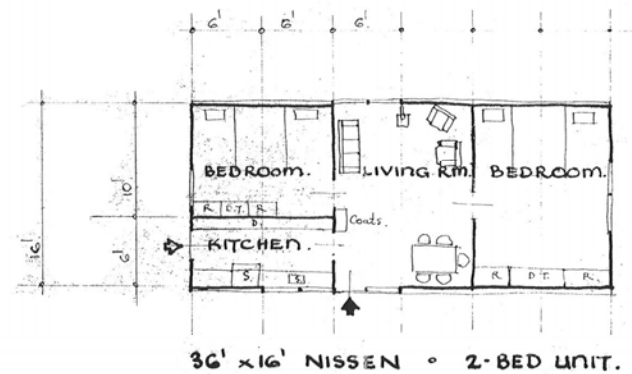
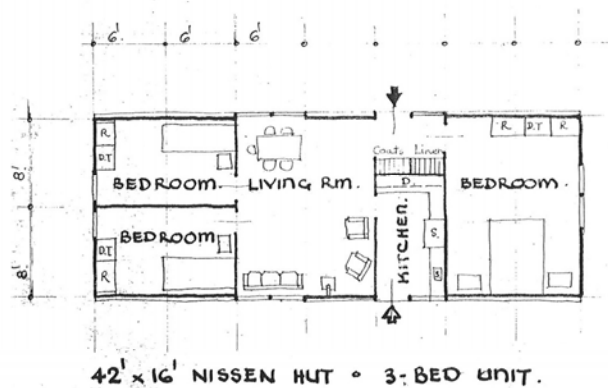
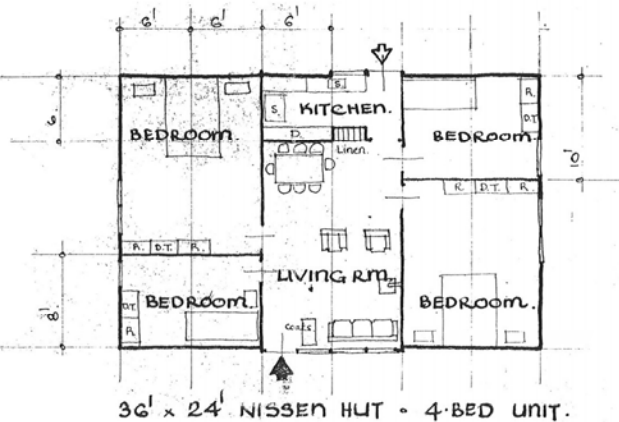
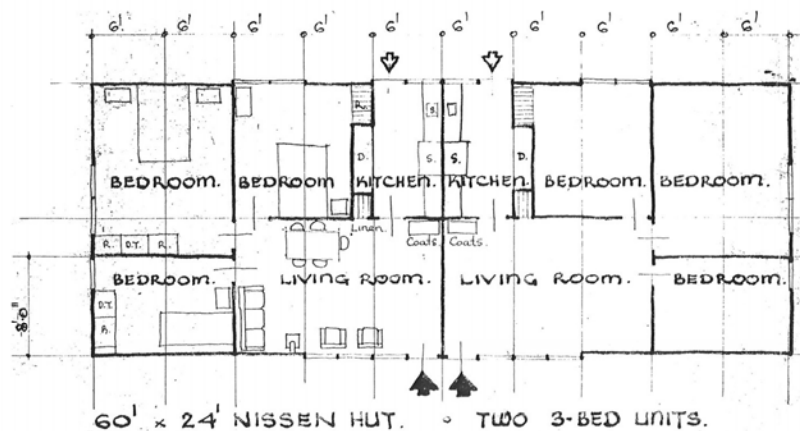
Jerilderie, NSW



Lockhart, NSW



Nissen huts re-used for migrant accommodation

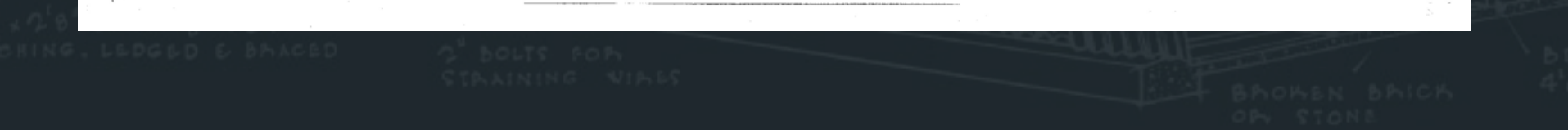


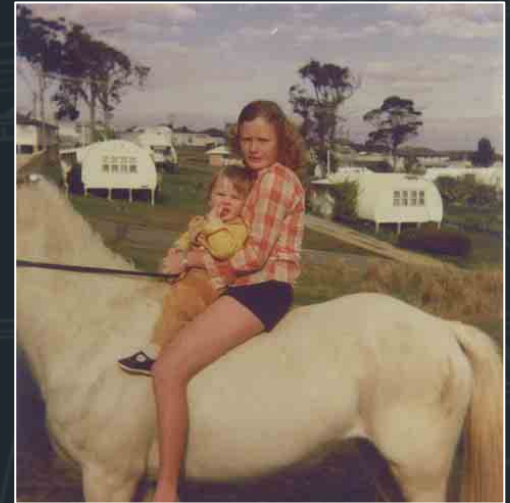
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MIGRANT ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

Nissen huts re-used for migrant accommodation





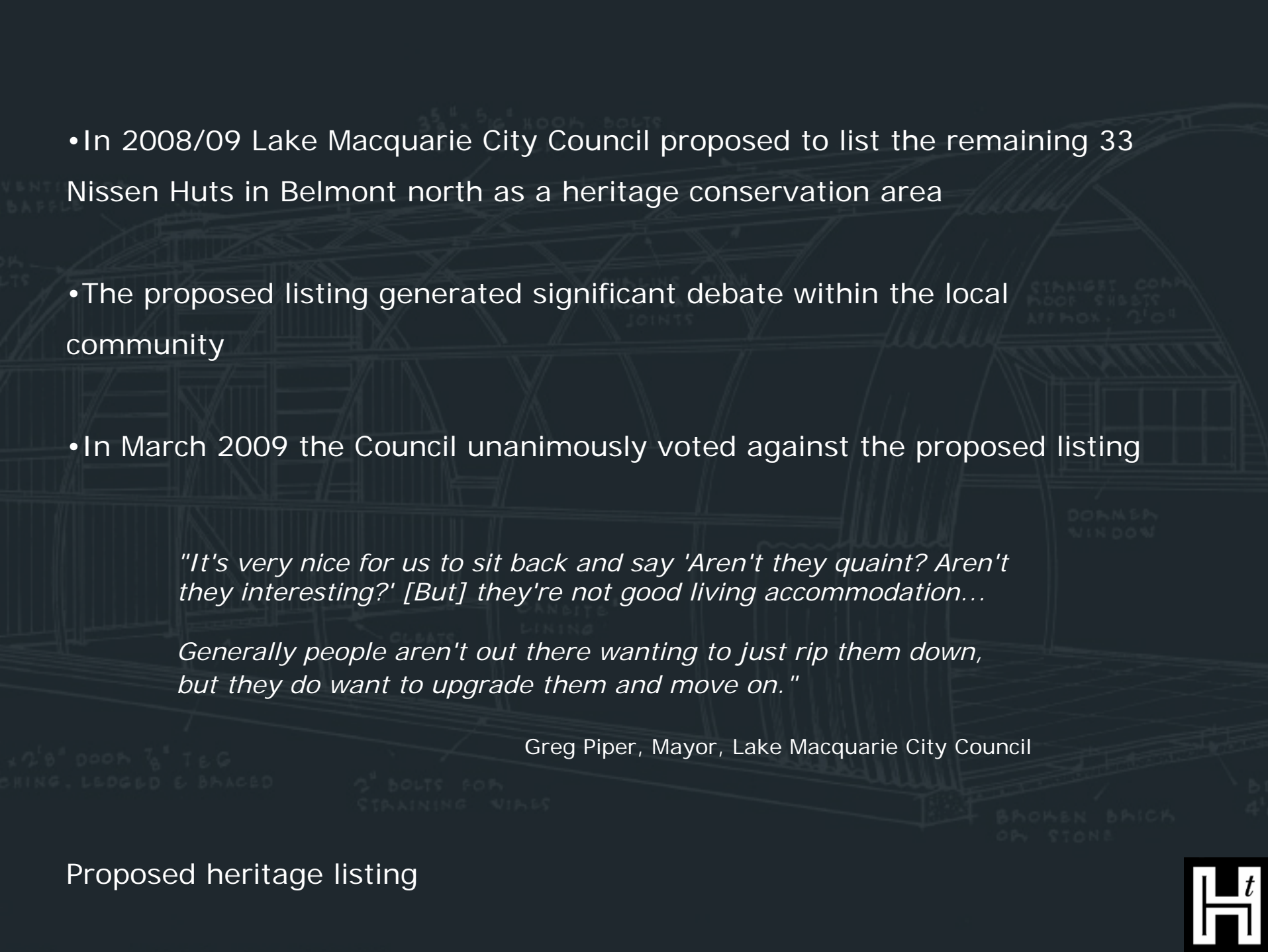


4 Somerset St - Belmont North

The Belmont North Nissen hut group is considered to be of State Significance as a:

- Rare surviving example of a group of pre-fabricated Nissen huts employed as permanent housing for migrant workers coming to Australia under the post war migrant assistance scheme
- The Nissen huts set out as an established suburban estate demonstrate the economic housing forms provided by the Commonwealth Government eager to supplement the labour shortages of the post war years
- The imported nature of the prefabricated housing and its frugal construction reflect political awareness of local sensitivities in a time of national material shortages

Statement of significance

- 
- In 2008/09 Lake Macquarie City Council proposed to list the remaining 33 Nissen Huts in Belmont north as a heritage conservation area
 - The proposed listing generated significant debate within the local community
 - In March 2009 the Council unanimously voted against the proposed listing

"It's very nice for us to sit back and say 'Aren't they quaint? Aren't they interesting?' [But] they're not good living accommodation..."

Generally people aren't out there wanting to just rip them down, but they do want to upgrade them and move on."

Greg Piper, Mayor, Lake Macquarie City Council

Proposed heritage listing

"[If] heritage provisions were to apply, a very unfair and unjust penalty would apply to genuine, hardworking families.

To put it bluntly, the residents of the Nissen huts are battlers and they do not deserve the unnecessary and unwarranted impost that having a heritage order will create.

It would in some cases destroy a lifetime goal of home ownership and basically condemn those affected to living in homes that are far inferior to the building codes and expectations of today.

A heritage order would significantly reduce the value of the properties and prevent further refurbishment to make them more habitable and comfortable."

Hon. Robert Coombes, Member for Swansea

COMPETITION BRIEF

The Nissen Hut

The intended outcome of the competition is to generate fresh ideas that may influence the solution for the upcoming conservation and adaptive reuse for residential purposes of the Nissen hut located at 4 Somerset St, Belmont North.

- The solutions will need to generate creative concepts, be cost effective and socially sustainable. They will be:
- technically well considered and demonstrate an understanding of the Nissen hut's unique and fragile structural system
- relevant, cost effective and practical
- respectful of the simple, robust, semi-cylindrical form of a Nissen hut
- innovative and include best practice ESD principles.

Data

Data including a site survey, technical data on the construction of the huts, historical research findings and Lake Macquarie City Council Draft Guidelines will be provided.

Schedule

30 July 2008 Launch
22 August 2008 Draft Submission
22 September 2008 Final Submission

Submission requirements

- 1:50 model (standard base board dimension to be determined)
- single A1 panel (vertical)
- maximum 2 x A4 page written submission

Exhibition

An exhibition of the finalists will be held at the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery in October 2008.

PRIZES

The Foundation for the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales assists the work of the HHT through fundraising and is generously offering \$5000 in total in prize money to be distributed at the discretion of the judging panel. The judging panel and the HHT reserve the right not to award prizes.

ELIGIBILITY

The competition is restricted to architecture students from Newcastle University currently enrolled in either the BDesArch or March.

JUDGING PANEL

Paul Berkeemeier, Paul Berkeemeier Architects, former Trustee Historic Houses Trust
Professor Michael Ostwald, Dean, School of Architecture and Built Environment, University of Newcastle
Richard Slink, Manager Endangered Houses Fund Historic Houses Trust
Linda Babic, Principal, Heitax Architecture, Heritage architects, Newcastle

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WORKING METHOD

Students may select to work individually or in groups. Groups that include students from a range of years are encouraged.

Tutorials will be provided in the studio on Fridays between 10am and 1pm for the duration of the competition. Students will be free to join any tutorial group at any time. A number of leading architects, environmentalists and engineers will be involved in some tutorials.

THE HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST PRESENTS an IDEAS COMPETITION

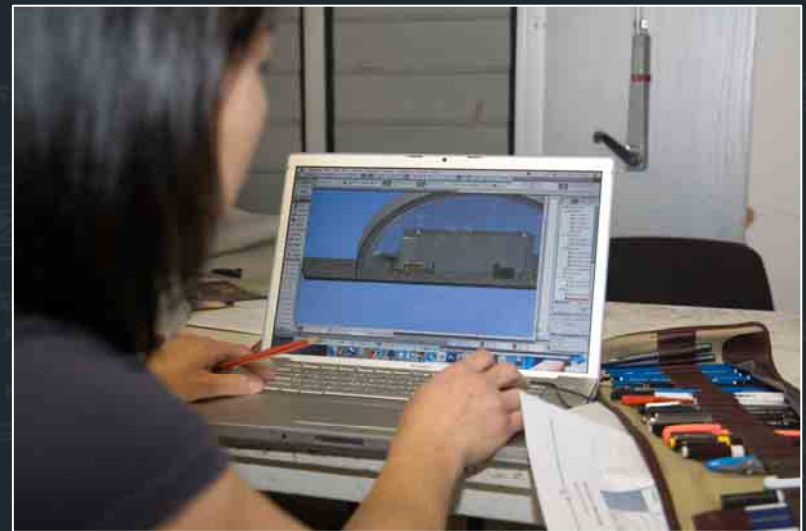
Conservation & Adaptive Reuse of a Nissen Hut,
4 Somerset Street, Belmont North

for NEWCASTLE
UNIVERSITY
ARCHITECTURE
STUDENTS



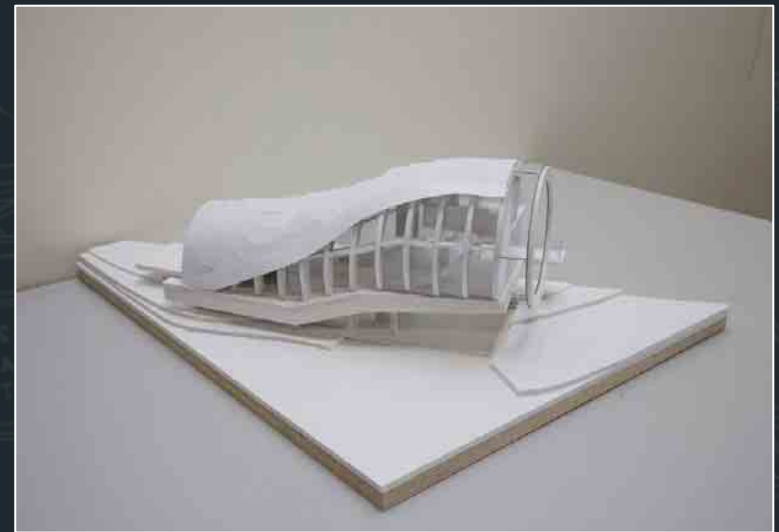
THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST



Student design competition





Student design competition



Student design competition exhibition at the LMCAG



"We were very happy here. They may not look like much from the outside, but on the inside I thought the huts were beautiful, really comfortable."

Helen Smith

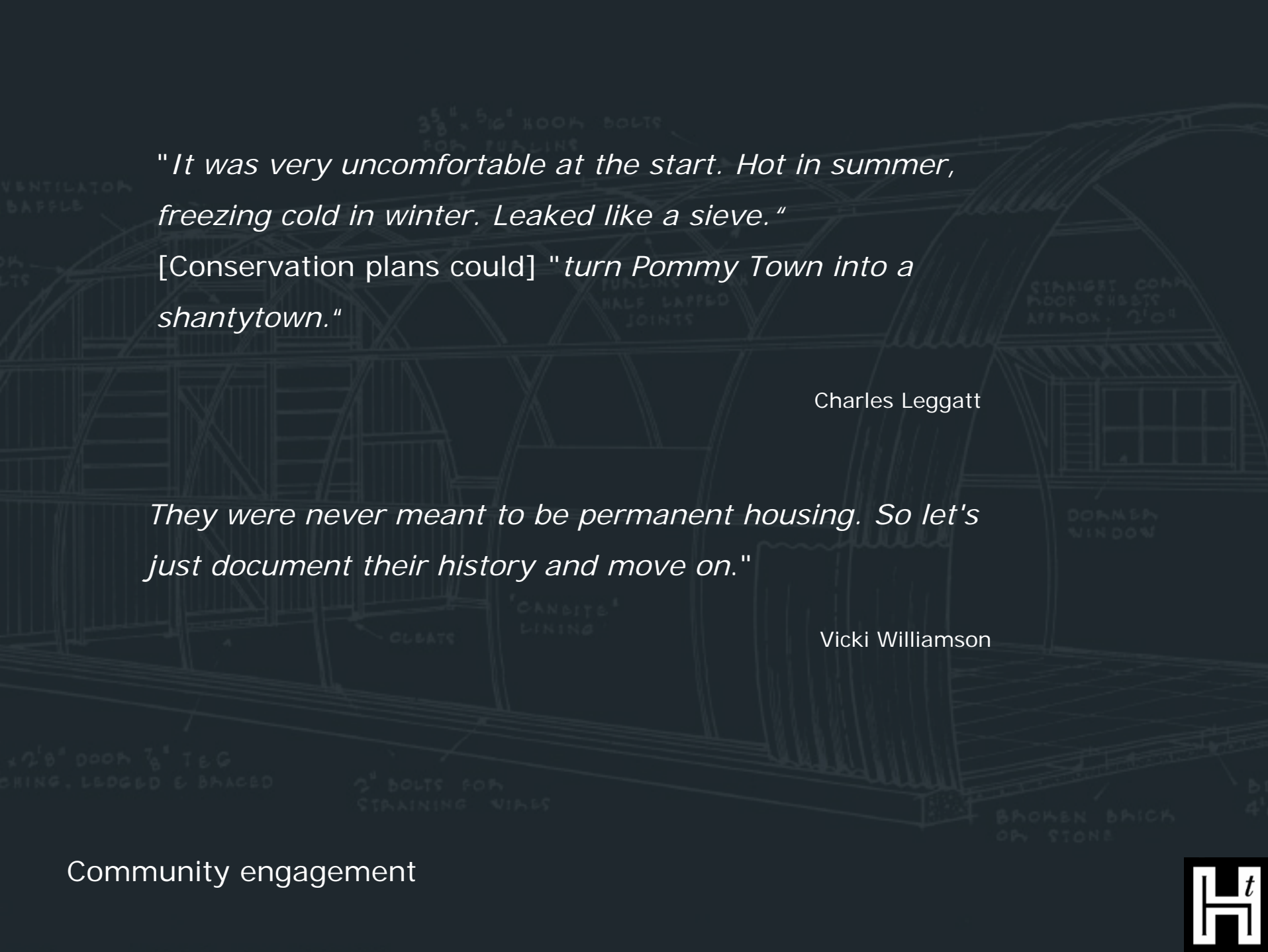
Community engagement



"I was only a visitor, but, sorry, I thought they were rubbish. Still do."

Kevin Williamson

Community engagement



"It was very uncomfortable at the start. Hot in summer, freezing cold in winter. Leaked like a sieve."

[Conservation plans could] *"turn Pommy Town into a shantytown."*

Charles Leggatt

"They were never meant to be permanent housing. So let's just document their history and move on."

Vicki Williamson

Community engagement



Performance brief:

- Create sense of permanence
- Improve environmental performance
- Improve aesthetic appeal
- Demonstrate cost effectiveness of retaining huts vs replacement
- Challenge the misconception that the form of the Nissen hut limits design potential
- Demonstrate that retention will not devalue the site

Design brief

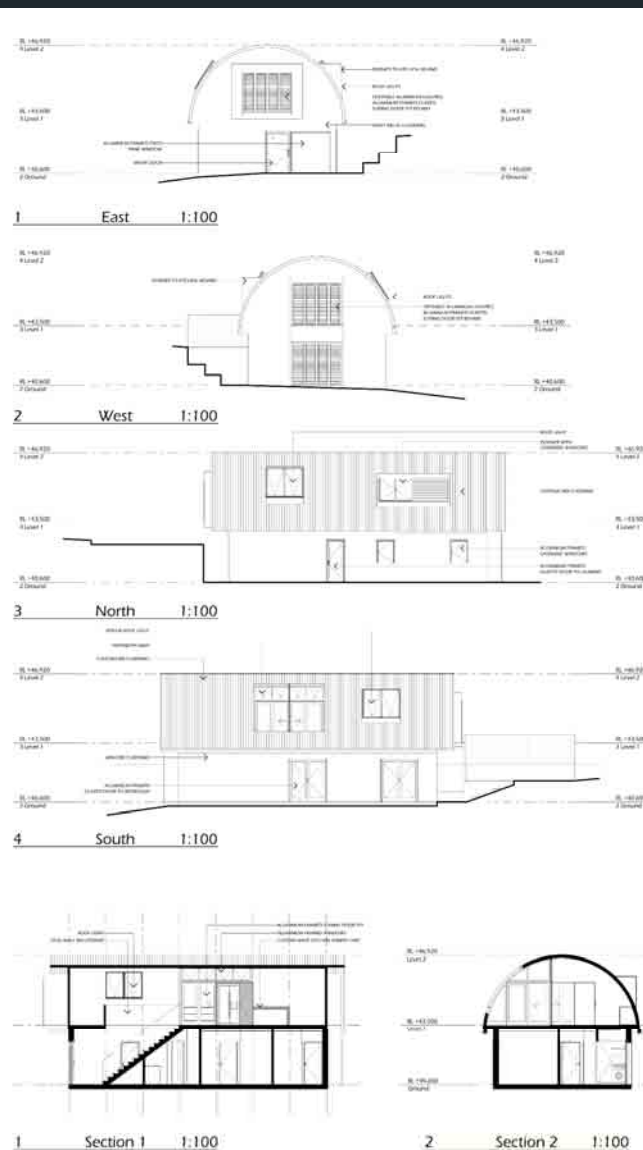
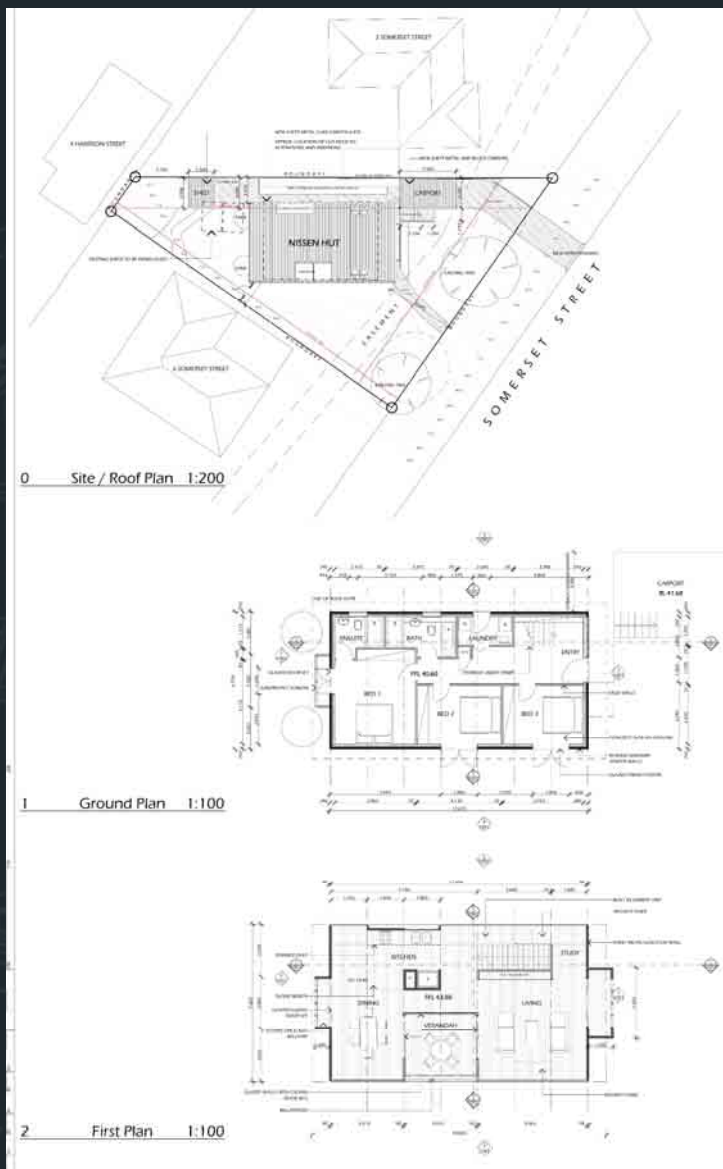
- Respond to the modular construction system of the Nissen hut
- Respect the distinctive semi-cylindrical form of the Nissen hut
- Provide quality accommodation to meet current standards



Nissen hut proposed alterations and additions



Nissen hut proposed alterations and additions



Project Name: Nissen Hut

Client: Heritas (Acquires Trust of NSW)

DA - Submission

Ground Plan, First Plan, West, East, South, North, Section 1, Section 2, Section 3, Section 4

Scale: 1:100, 1:200

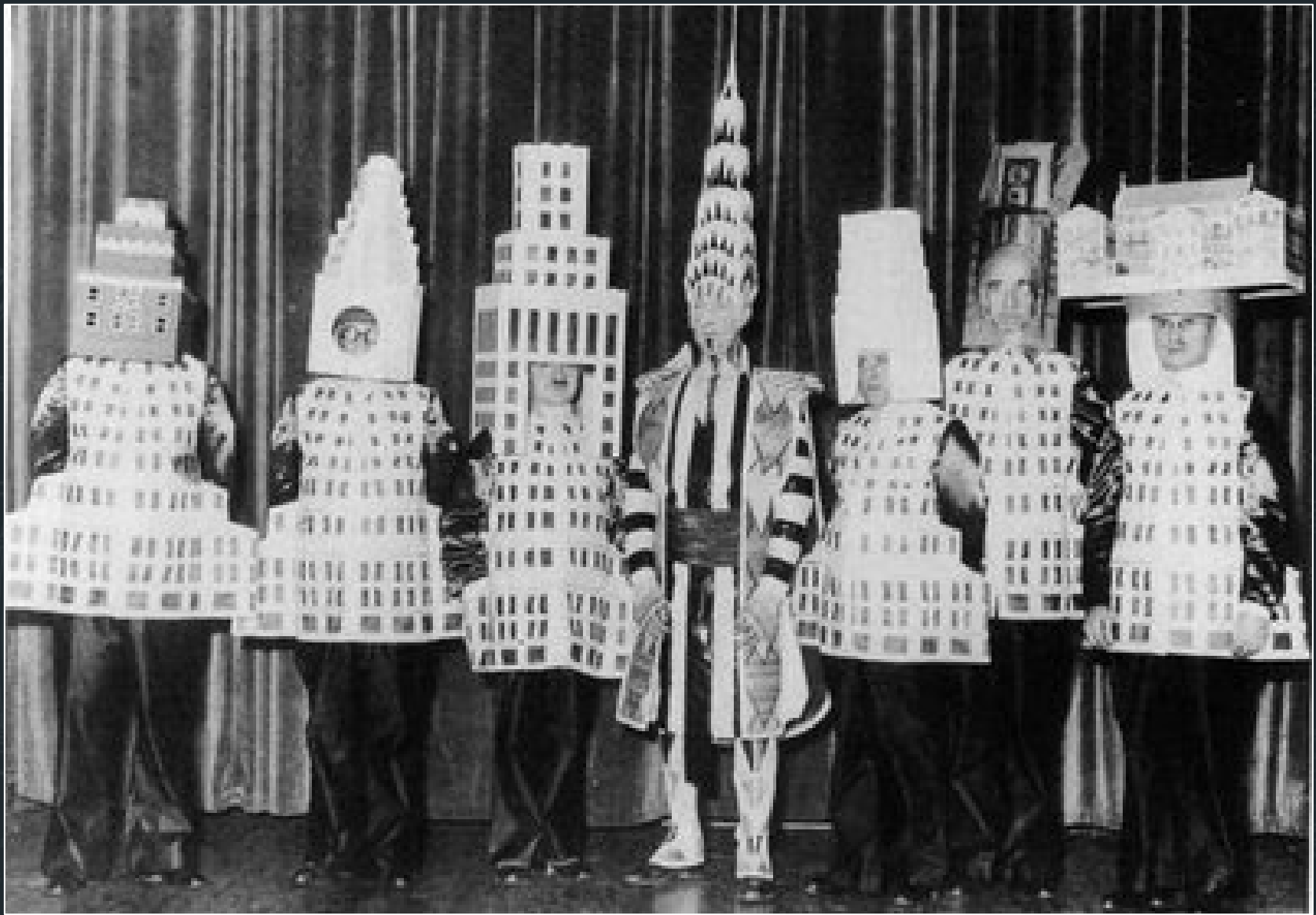
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Heritas

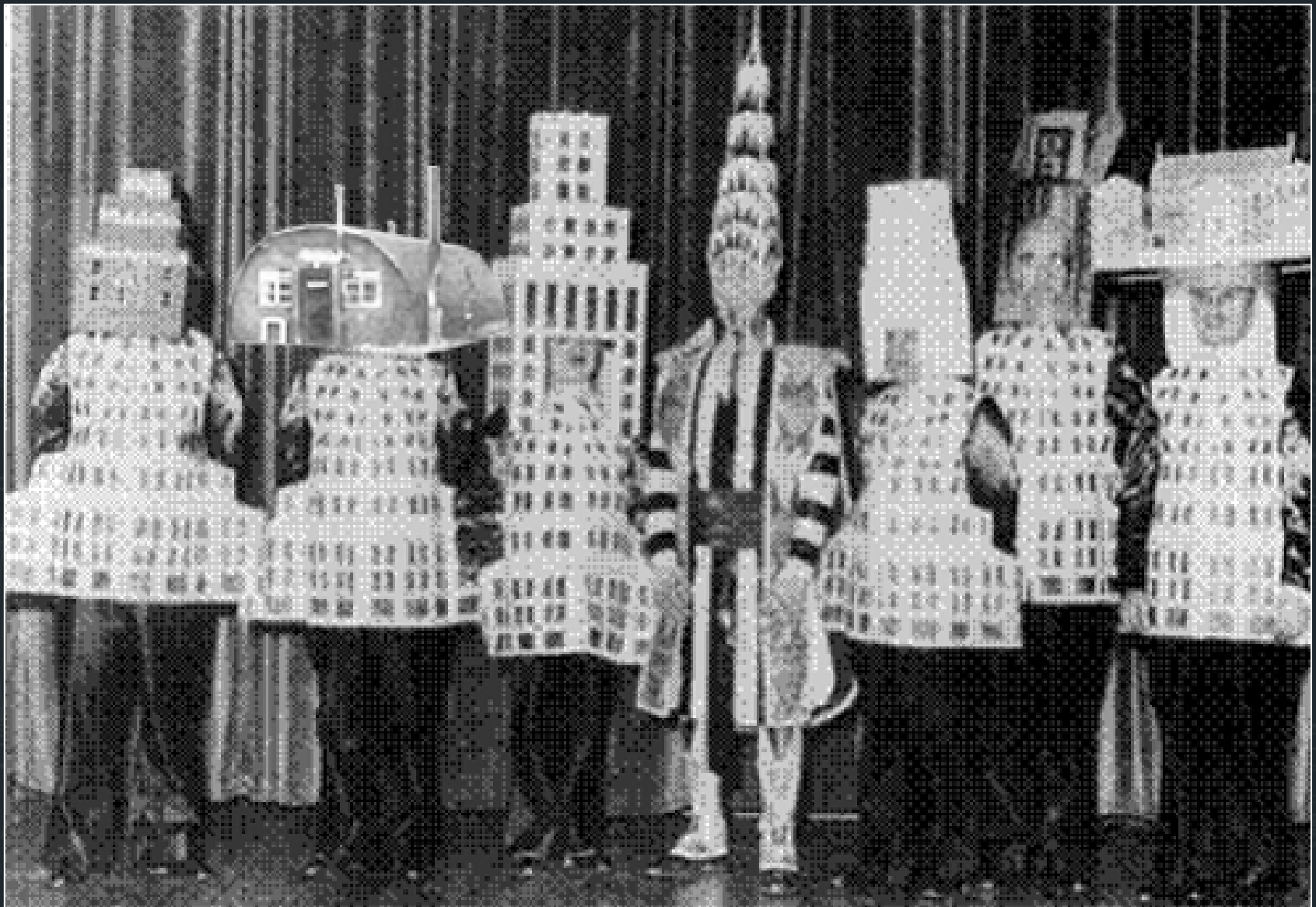
Heritas (Acquires Trust of NSW)

Nissen hut proposed alterations and additions





Learning to love the Nissen hut



Learning to love the Nissen hut

Dr. Strangelove

Or:
How
I Learned
To
Stop
Worrying
And
Love
The
Bomb



Learning to love the Nissen hut

Dr. Strangelove

Or:
How
I Learned
To
Stop
Worrying
And
Love
The
Nissen Hut



Learning to love the Nissen hut



"So you live in a Nissen hut, too?"

KOHLER—

Learning to love the Nissen hut